



# THE CARSON COLLECTIVE

A December Update from the Carsons!

## Garden Grove

This campus has been a blessing. The Bible study has doubled in size. The lunch meetings are packed, wall-to-wall. We had the largest group from Grove go to our winter conference, Fastbreak! A few are even going to church now for the first time at Redemption Point in Fountain Valley! It's wild to know that this group all started from one Bible study being canceled, and then meeting Daniel. When I asked Daniel what he thought the key moments were that grew the movement, he brought up four. The first was the day that I randomly approached him and his friends during evangelism. The second, was when he was walking to Cru during lunch and his friends asked where he was going. "I'm going to a Christian club! You should come with me!" To his surprise, they also wanted to hear more about faith and later joined our board.



The third was our leader training, LIFT. There, he and his friends experienced, and fell in love with, Christian worship for the first time! The fourth was our winter conference, Fastbreak, which you'll hear more on from our January update. Daniel said, "Man... I'm so thankful that we met that day. I'm thankful that Sean and James wanted to check out Cru. I'm thankful for LIFT and Fastbreak! Without those things, I wouldn't be a Christian and my life would be so dull! Most of all, I'm thankful to God for providing those for me!"



## Prayer Requests

- Pray for our students at Garden Grove. While our study is growing, there are still many more that need Jesus and want to get involved.
- Pray for our family as we prepare for sabbatical in July. Life and ministry has been constant over the years, and we are really looking forward to a season of rest. Please pray for the Lord to also give us direction during this time.



## Christmas and Sabbatical

This Christmas was special as it marked Brandt's 10th year being in California! It was special to look back over the decade and meditate on how the Lord has constantly been faithful through the years. Right after winter break, Selah had a few procedures done to assist with her acid reflex, heart rhythms, and chronic ear infections. She was so strong and even prayed for her doctor before the surgery! "Dee Gawd. Halp. (pointing at the doctor) Theenk you! Aaaaaamen." She recovered quickly and she is back to her normal, fashion-loving self!

We recently realized that we forgot to take our seven-year sabbatical! Because of that, we are going to take one as a family this summer—which will be the first one in ELEVEN years of ministry. Please pray the Lord would bring us rest and connection during this time. If you have any access to special resources, activities, or accommodations for us to utilize as a family during this time, let us know! Thank you for your continued love, prayer, and support!



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## Fastbreak 2024

At our winter conference, I had the honor of being the emcee as well as the director of young men's seminar. On the top right, you'll also see my 14 boys from Fountain Valley and Garden Grove. At the end of the day, we would sit in our cabins and reflect on what God had taught us that day.

On the second night, we talked about the idea of being "fully known & fully loved". The idea is that we can often hide our sin and shortcomings from others because we are afraid. The first student said, "I have a secret that I've never told anyone... I feel weird and alone for saying this, but I watch porn online and I don't know how to stop." Another guy shared, "Me too! It didn't bother me before, but after I became a Christian in Cru, it feels so much worse! Is that the Holy Spirit talking to me?" Knowing that they weren't alone and that they are loved in their sin, was a powerful realization for them. Sin thrives in the darkness, but shrivels in the Light!



## Prayer Requests

- Pray for my boys in their battle to be satisfied in God alone. While it's wonderful that they are experiencing being fully known and fully loved, the next step is to help them learn to combat the lies of the enemy. Just like the original lie in the garden, satan wants us to believe that God isn't good and doesn't love us.
- Pray that they would seek and believe truth... that Jesus is good... and that He is worth it!



Part of our FV and GG team!

## Guys Time

On Sunday, our 364 students separated into guys and girls time. When I prayed over the preparation of the time, I felt God asking me to speak sexual purity. I started by giving students a ten-question survey. After collecting the responses anonymously, I randomly redistributed them. Then, I had participants stand if their survey indicated a 'yes' for the first question, providing real-time statistics from the room.

For the question 'Do you often feel lonely or unloved?', 70% stood up. Regarding the definition of shame – feeling unwanted or unworthy of belonging – only 10 remained seated. As for 'Have you watched pornography?', all but 5 were standing. And almost the entirety of the room believed that their sexual sin would go away once they were happily married to a Godly woman. Clearly the Lord had lead us to speak on a needed topic! Sexual sin often stems from shame and dissatisfaction with God. Many boys turn to porn as a coping mechanism without recognizing it, stemming from deep emotional repression. To address this, I led them in an emotional awareness exercise to help them better understand and navigate their feelings. One student shared: 'I used to think I turned to porn out of boredom, but now, as a Christian, I realize my guilt is heavier. The exercise revealed feelings of loneliness, a desire for a girlfriend, and stress about the future. Porn never healed these; how do I let Jesus heal this?' I was encouraged to see that he understood the first step! Pray as we lead them to Jesus in this journey.

